Colchester Board of Education Diversity, Equity and Inclusion ad hoc Committee

(DRAFT – working document. This document is meant to create awareness, brainstorm ideas and eventually develop goals)

Definition of Terms: (for the purpose of this Committee

Diversity:

Diversity – an attribute of a given society that reflects the variety of difference expressed and sustained among the people and communities that compose that given society. The types of difference most commonly represented in a society are based on social identity markers that are considered "protected classes" by the CT General Statues.

Diversity is the range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, or ethical values system and national origin.

Operationalize:

Create a diverse community while nurturing a supportive culture.

School hiring and retention practices are deliberately focused on increasing diversity of the educator and the workforce.

Equity:

Equity (Social) - "The fair, just and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract, and the fair and equitable distribution of public services, and implementation of public policy, [including laws pertaining to human rights,] and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy… [Social equity is] the fourth pillar of public administration, along with economy, efficiency, and effectiveness." **- National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), 2005.** Discovering, bridging, and sealing the gaps between human rights law and the public administration of that law while also correcting the deeper issues that open and widen these gaps. Identify shortcomings in current diversity and inclusion practices by organizing the development and enactment of clear and consistent policies of social equity.

Operationalize:
Uncover root causes of disproportionality.
Invest in Student Ownership of Learning.
Review Equity Indices: Where is access a problem?
Eliminate barriers to student's success.
Include equity as a foundation in Colchester Public School and Board of Education goals
Draft and adopt an "Equity Policy", an equity statement.
Supporting student and staff Mental Health through a "Community of Wellness":
Review Mental Health and Behavioral Supports for students (including "Positive Behavioral Supports").

Assess methodology for "scoring" "grading" to ensure common standards and common rubrics.
Assess grading system; promote a design to provide feedback to students so that they can take charge of their learning.
Develop a process to embody "Self Determination" practices.

Avoid sorting students into "levels".
Student diversity is represented in advanced classes.
Students have many opportunities to meet with an advisor to craft their course selection, design extended learning opportunities and explore college or post-graduation plans.
All students are asked to engage in complex, rigorous work.
Utilize an "asset based" approach, helping students to see and build on their own academic and personal strengths.
Students have the opportunity to give teachers feedback on classromm culture, assignment, grading and other aspects of teaching practice. Structures also exist that enable community members to give feedback to the school and school staff.

School personnel are trained and are able to utilize "Trauma informed" practices.
School personnel are able are trained and able to use the process of "Mediation" or "Restorative Practice" when conflicts occur or school discipline is triggered.
Efforts are made to maximize instructional time in the classroom vs suspension from class.

Inclusion:

Inclusion: Creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported and valued as a fully participating member.

To generate and amplify a spirit of inclusion by following, amplifying, centering, engaging and serving voices and cultures that are currently underrepresented or excluded. Creating an environment where everyone can feel safe and valued.

Operationalize:
Facilitating opportunities to learn about challenges to inclusivity and appropriate remedies to those challenges.
Create "Communities of Belonging"; Students and parents feel safe and valued.
Facilitate peer to peer support.
Develop clubs, publications, and extracurricular activities to provide opportunities for students to express their ideas and beliefs. Students are empowered to create new clubs when they see a need.
The School promotes student leadership by embedding leadership development in the curriculum and providing resources to help staff become youth allies. Marginalized students are represented in leadership structures, decision-making processes, and curriculum development.
The school partners with community organizations to provide opportunities for community-wide discussions of anti-racism and anti-bias.

Cultural Competance:

Cultural Competence: accepting and respecting diversity and differences in a continuous process of self-assessment and reflection of one's personal and organizational perceptions of the dynamics of culture. (uslegal.com) A set of attitudes, behaviors and policies that combines knowledge about groups of people into practices and standards to improve the quality of services to all cultural groups that are served.

Operationalize:

Assess to collect data regarding mitigating implicit bias. Utilize assessment tools/measures to determine baseline to monitor and gauge rates of implicit bias. Use this information to design training for Cultural Competance and Implicit Bias.
There is a commitment among school personnel and BOE to explore and discuss their own identities and the ways their identities have been impacted buy privilege and bias.
Members of the school community have the training and ability to recognize and interrupt implicit and explicit prejudicial and harmful language or actions such as microagressions or bullying of individuals and groups.
Develop or recruit essential DEI training for BOE.
Assist teachers with being able to talk to students about current events and modern "social issues"
Provide an opportunity for students to explore and question their own beliefs about race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental and physical ability.